

Station Road
Newton St Cyres
Devon
(School Site)

Archaeological Evaluation



for
Elliot UK

CA Project: 880138
CA Report: 16461

October 2016



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Devon
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| A | 6 October 2016 | Jonathan Orellana | Derek Evans | Internal review | – | John Dillon |
| B | 2 March 2017 | Jonathan Orellana | Derek Evans | Curator review | Revisions to Fig. 2 in line with Curator comments | John Dillon |
| | | | | | | |
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SUMMARY

Project Name: Station Road
Location: Newton St Cyres, Devon
NGR: SX 88103 98258
Type: Evaluation
Date: 15–16 August 2016
Planning Reference: Mid Devon District Council: 14/01332/MOUT
Site Code: NSC 16

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2016 at Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon. A total of nine trenches was excavated.

The evaluation identified a pit and two postholes, all of which were undated.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2016, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out an archaeological evaluation for Elliot UK at Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon (centred on NGR: SX 88103 98258; Fig. 1).

1.2 Mid Devon District Council (MDDC; the local planning authority) has granted outline planning permission (planning ref: 14/01332/MOUT) for a mixed use development at the site, to comprise:

- a primary school and preschool with ancillary facilities, including a sports pitch and a parking and turning area; and
- the erection of up to 25 dwellings with associated parking and open space.

1.3 Condition 14 of the outline planning permission states that:

No development on either the school site and/or housing site shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out at all times in strict accordance with the approved scheme, or such other details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

1.4 The scope of this archaeological evaluation was defined in discussions with Stephen Reed, Senior Historic Environment Officer, Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCCHET), the archaeological advisor to MDDC. The evaluation was undertaken in two stages: the proposed residential area was evaluated in June 2016 (CA 2016a); this report presents the results of the school area evaluation.

1.5 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by CA (2016b) and approved by Stephen Reed. The evaluation was also in line with *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (ClfA 2014), *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation* (Historic England 2015), and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE)*:

Project Manager's Guide (Historic England 2015). It was monitored by Stephen Reed, including a site visit on 16 August 2016.

The site

- 1.6 The proposed development site lies on the eastern side of Station Road, on the northern outskirts of Newton St Cyres, Devon. The site encloses c. 3ha in total and currently comprises parts of two fields. The northern field is under grass pasture; the southern field is an orchard. Further agricultural fields lie to the north, east and west of the site; a residential estate lies to the south.
- 1.7 The solid geology of the proposed development site is mapped mainly as Shute Sandstone Formation, although there is an area of Newton St Cyres Breccia Formation in the south-western corner of the site. The solid geology is overlain by alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels in the eastern part of the site; no superficial deposits are recorded in the remainder of the site (BGS 2016). The natural substrate was exposed in all nine evaluation trenches and comprised alluvial sands.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site has been the subject of a geophysical survey (Substrata 2014), a desk-based heritage assessment (AC Archaeology 2014) and a trial trench evaluation (CA 2016a). The following section is summarised from these sources.
- 2.2 The cropmarks of 12 ditched enclosures of likely prehistoric or Roman date have been recorded within 1km of the site boundary. The putative line of a Roman road between Exeter and Crediton ran to the south of the site.
- 2.3 Nineteenth century and later cartographic sources show that the site was pasture, orchard and meadow land from at least 1843 until the present day, although a leat (now infilled) ran through the eastern part of the site on a rough north/south alignment until at least 1905. The First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (1889) shows two rectangular buildings in the north-central part of the site; these structures are not depicted on the Second Edition OS map (1905).
- 2.4 The geophysical survey detected several anomalies suggestive of potential archaeological features.

- 2.5 The trial trench evaluation of the proposed residential area recorded three ditches (Fig. 2). Two of these ditches were post-medieval/modern in date; the third was undated artefactually, but was stratigraphically earlier than the other ditches.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The evaluation results will inform discussions between the developers and DCCHET on the need for and scope of any further archaeological works at the site.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork comprised the excavation of nine trenches within that part of the site proposed for school development (T3, T4, T6 and T9–T14; Fig. 2). Four trenches were 20m long; five trenches were 10m long; all trenches were 1.9m wide. The trenches were located both to test geophysical anomalies and to provide a representative sample of geophysically 'blank' areas. All trenches were set out on OS National Grid (NGR) co-ordinates using Leica GPS and surveyed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 4: Survey Manual*.
- 4.2 All trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under constant archaeological supervision to the top of the natural substrate. Where archaeological deposits were encountered, they were excavated by hand in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 1: Fieldwork Recording Manual*.
- 4.3 Deposits were assessed for their palaeoenvironmental potential in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites* and a single sample was taken and processed. All recovered artefacts were processed in accordance with *CA Technical Manual 3: Treatment of Finds Immediately after Excavation*.
- 4.4 A summary of information from the evaluation, including the final version of this report, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain.

- 4.5 As no significant archaeological features were identified during the evaluation, it is not proposed to prepare and deposit a project archive. The evaluation results will be held by DCCHET in the form of this report and the OASIS entry discussed above. The archaeological condition will be discharged upon receipt of the report by DCCHET and completion of the OASIS entry.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 This section provides an overview of the evaluation results. Detailed summaries of the recorded contexts are to be found in Appendix A. An account of the palaeoenvironmental evidence recovered during the evaluation is provided in Section 6 and Appendix B.
- 5.2 The natural substrate comprised alluvial sands and was encountered across the site at depths of 0.65m (T3) to 0.9m (T12) below present ground level (bpgl). Colluvial layers measuring 0.15m–0.35m in thickness overlay the natural substrate in T6 and T12; these were sealed by a sandy silt subsoil layer. In all other trenches, the natural substrate was overlain directly by the subsoil. The subsoil was covered in all trenches by the modern topsoil.
- 5.3 Archaeological features were recorded in T6 only. The remainder of the trenches were blank, except for modern field drains identified in T13 and T14.

Trench 6 (Figs. 2 & 3)

- 5.4 Natural substrate 603 was encountered 0.85m bpgl. It was cut at the southern end of the trench by elongated pit 604/608/612. This pit was north-south orientated, with a flat base. It measured 1.72m in length and 0.98m in width (Fig. 3, Sec. AA). The pit contained a single charcoal-rich fill, which was undated artefactually. An environmental bulk soil sample <1> was taken from this fill.
- 5.5 Pit 604/608/612 was cut by shallow posthole 610 (Fig. 3, Sec. CC), which measured 0.23m in diameter and 0.07m in depth. A second posthole, 606, was recorded to the immediate north of pit 604/608/612; this posthole measured 0.22m in diameter and 0.08m in depth. Neither of these postholes contained any dating evidence in their single fills.

- 5.6 All three of the features in T6 were sealed by 0.15m-thick colluvial layer 602, which was covered in turn by subsoil 601 and topsoil 600 (combined thickness 0.7m).

6. THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

- 6.1 A single environmental sample (20 litres of soil) was taken from pit 604 (T6) with the intention of recovering evidence of domestic or industrial activity on the site. The samples were processed by standard flotation procedures (*CA Technical Manual 2: The Taking and Processing of Environmental and Other Samples from Archaeological Sites*).
- 6.2 Preliminary identifications of plant macrofossils are noted in Appendix B, following the nomenclature of Stace (1997) for wild plants, and traditional nomenclature, as provided by Zohary *et al* (2012) for cereals.

Sample 1: fill 605 (pit 604, T6)

- 6.3 The flot was large, with a small amount of rooty material and modern seeds.
- 6.4 The sample contained a large quantity of charred plant remains, of varying levels of preservation. The cereal remains included free-threshing wheat (*Triticum turgidum/aestivum* type) grain and rachis fragments, barley grains (*Hordeum vulgare*) and possible rye grains (*Secale cereale*). The weed seeds included seeds of oats (*Avena* sp.), brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), rye-grass/fescue (*Lolium/Festuca* sp.), *Persicaria* (*Persicaria* sp.), black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) and goosefoot (*Chenopodium* sp.), and capsules of runch (*Raphanus raphanistrum*). Some of the oat seeds may be those of the cultivated species. A large quantity of charcoal fragments greater than 2mm was recovered; this included mature wood fragments.
- 6.5 The assemblage is likely to be representative of domestic waste. The weed seeds are those of species typical of grassland, field margin and arable environments. Free-threshing wheat became predominant in southern Britain from the early medieval period (Greig 1991) and this assemblage is comparable with other assemblages of early medieval and medieval date.

7. DISCUSSION

- 7.1 The evaluation identified a pit and two postholes in T6, corresponding to a geophysical anomaly. None of the geophysical anomalies tested by T4 and T9–T14 were found to correspond to below-ground archaeological features.
- 7.2 The features in T6 were undated artefactually, although palaeoenvironmental remains recovered from the fill of pit 604/608/612 were consistent with an early medieval/medieval date.
- 7.3 The previous evaluation of the residential part of the site (CA 2016a) recorded two post-medieval/modern ditches and an undated ditch. In combination, the results of both evaluation phases indicate that the site has low archaeological potential.

8. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork was undertaken by Jonathan Orellana, assisted by Jerry Austin and Christina Tapply. This report was written by Jonathan Orellana. The palaeoenvironmental evidence report was written by Sarah Wyles. The illustrations were prepared by Lesley Davidson and Sam O’Leary. The project was managed for CA by Derek Evans.

9. REFERENCES

AC Archaeology 2014 *Land at Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon: Statement of Archaeological Potential, Impact and Mitigation* AC Archaeology Report **140731**

BGS (British Geological Survey) 2016 *Geology of Britain*
Viewer <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>
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CA (Cotswold Archaeology) 2016b *Station Road, Newton St. Cyres, Devon: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Work*

Greig, J 1991 'The British Isles' in van Zeist, W, Wasylikowa, K and Behre, K-E (eds)
Progress in Old World Palaeoethnobotany, Rotterdam 229–334

Stace, C 1997 *New Flora of the British Isles* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press Books

Substrata 2014 *An archaeological gradiometer survey: Land at Newton St Cyres, Devon*

Zohary, D, Hopf, M and Weiss, E 2012 *Domestication of plants in the Old World: the origin and spread of cultivated plants in West Asia, Europe, and the Nile Valley*, 4th edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press



APPENDIX A: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| Trench No. | Context No. | Type | Fill of | Context interpretation | Description | L (m) | W (m) | D (m) |
|------------|-------------|-------|---------|------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 3 | 300 | Layer | | topsoil | mid greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.3 |
| 3 | 301 | Layer | | subsoil | mid reddish brown sandy silt | | | 0.35 |
| 3 | 302 | Layer | | natural substrate | light pinkish brown clayey sand | | | |
| 4 | 400 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown silty clay | | | 0.35 |
| 4 | 401 | Layer | | subsoil | light reddish brown sandy silt | | | 0.35 |
| 4 | 402 | Layer | | natural substrate | light orangey brown clayey sand | | | |
| 6 | 600 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.35 |
| 6 | 601 | Layer | | subsoil | mid pinkish brown sandy clay | | | 0.35 |
| 6 | 602 | Layer | | colluvium | light pinkish brown sandy silt | | | 0.15 |
| 6 | 603 | Layer | | natural substrate | firm mid reddish pink clayey sand | | | |
| 6 | 604 | Cut | | pit | N/S orientated, elongated in plan with moderate sloping sides and flat base | >0.67 | 0.98 | 0.12 |
| 6 | 605 | Fill | 604 | single fill of pit | mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and smears | >0.67 | 0.98 | 0.12 |
| 6 | 606 | Cut | | posthole | circular in plan, bowl-shaped profile and concave base | 0.26 | 0.22 | 0.08 |
| 6 | 607 | Fill | 606 | fill of posthole | light brown sandy silt | 0.26 | 0.22 | 0.08 |
| 6 | 608 | Cut | | pit | N/S orientated, elongated in plan with moderate sloping sides and flat base | >0.45 | >0.4 | 0.1 |
| 6 | 609 | Fill | 608 | single fill of pit | mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and smears | >0.45 | >0.4 | 0.1 |
| 6 | 610 | Cut | | posthole | sub-oval in plan, moderate sloping sides and concave base | 0.25 | 0.23 | 0.07 |
| 6 | 611 | Fill | 610 | fill of posthole | light reddish brown sandy silt | 0.25 | 0.23 | 0.07 |
| 6 | 612 | Cut | | pit | N/S orientated, elongated in plan with moderate sloping sides and flat base | >0.2 | >0.2 | 0.08 |
| 6 | 613 | Fill | 612 | single fill of pit | mid greyish brown sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and smears | >0.2 | >0.2 | 0.08 |
| 9 | 900 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 9 | 901 | Layer | | subsoil | mid orangey brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 9 | 902 | Layer | | natural substrate | mid yellowish brown clayey sand with outcrops of stone | | | |
| 10 | 1000 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 10 | 1001 | Layer | | subsoil | mid orangey brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 10 | 1002 | Layer | | natural substrate | mid yellowish brown clayey sand | | | |
| 11 | 1100 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 11 | 1101 | Layer | | subsoil | light brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 11 | 1102 | Layer | | natural substrate | mid yellowish brown clayey sand | | | |
| 12 | 1200 | Layer | | topsoil | mid greyish brown clayey silt | | | 0.2 |
| 12 | 1201 | Layer | | subsoil | dark greyish brown clayey silt | | | 0.35 |
| 12 | 1202 | Layer | | colluvium | light orangey brown sandy silt | | | 0.35 |
| 12 | 1203 | Layer | | natural substrate | light orangey brown clayey sand | | | |
| 13 | 1300 | Layer | | topsoil | mid greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 13 | 1301 | Layer | | subsoil | light yellowish grey silty clay | | | 0.45 |
| 13 | 1302 | Layer | | natural substrate | light brownish grey clayey sand with outcrops of stone | | | |
| 14 | 1400 | Layer | | topsoil | dark greyish brown sandy silt | | | 0.4 |
| 14 | 1401 | Layer | | subsoil | light yellowish grey silty clay | | | 0.4 |
| 14 | 1402 | Layer | | natural substrate | mid yellowish brown clayey sand | | | |

APPENDIX B: THE PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

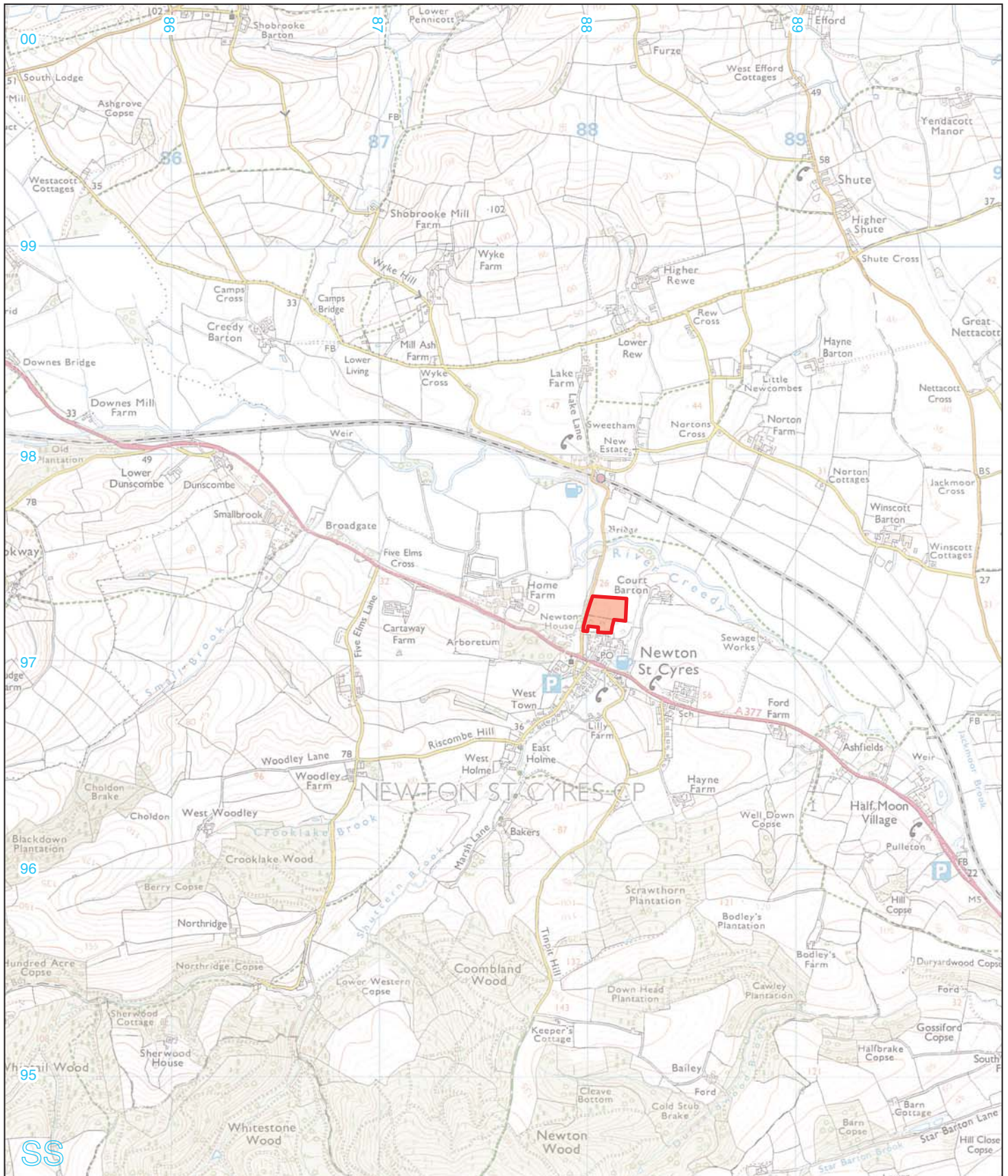
Palaeoenvironmental remains assessment table

| Feature | Context | Sample | Processed vol (L) | Un- processed vol (L) | Flot size (ml) | Roots % | Grain | Chaff | Cereal Notes | Charred Other | Notes | Charcoal > 4/2mm | Other |
|----------------|---------|--------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------|-------|-------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|-------|
| Trench 6 - Pit | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 604 | 605 | 1 | 20 | 20 | 225 | 10 | ***** | ** | F-t wheat, barley ?rye grain frags, f-t wheat rachis frags | ***** | <i>Avena</i> (inc. prob. cultivated), <i>Bromus</i> , <i>Persicaria</i> , <i>Fallopia</i> , <i>Raphanus</i> , <i>Lolium</i> / <i>Festuca</i> , <i>Chenopodium</i> | ****/***** | - |

Key: * = 1–4 items; ** = 5–19 items; *** = 20–49 items; **** = 50–99 items; ***** = >100 items

APPENDIX C: OASIS REPORT FORM

| | | |
|--|---|---------|
| PROJECT DETAILS | | |
| Project Name | Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon: archaeological evaluation | |
| Short description | <p>An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology in August 2016 at Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon. A total of nine trenches was excavated.</p> <p>The evaluation identified a pit and two postholes, all of which were undated.</p> | |
| Project dates | 15-16 August 2016 | |
| Project type | Archaeological Evaluation | |
| Previous work | Geophysical survey (Substrata 2014) Desk-based assessment (AC Archaeology 2014) Field evaluation (Cotswold Archaeology 2016) | |
| Future work | Unknown | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | | |
| Site Location | Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon | |
| Study area (M ² /ha) | c. 3ha | |
| Site co-ordinates | SX 8809 9822 | |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | |
| Name of organisation | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Brief originator | N/A | |
| Project Design (WSI) originator | Cotswold Archaeology | |
| Project Manager | Derek Evans | |
| Project Supervisor | Jonathan Orellana | |
| MONUMENT TYPE | None | |
| SIGNIFICANT FINDS | None | |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | Intended final location of archive | Content |
| Physical | N/A | N/A |
| Paper | N/A | N/A |
| Digital | N/A | N/A |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | |
| Cotswold Archaeology 2016 <i>Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon (School Site): Archaeological Evaluation</i> CA typescript report 16461 | | |



Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

Site location plan

0 1km

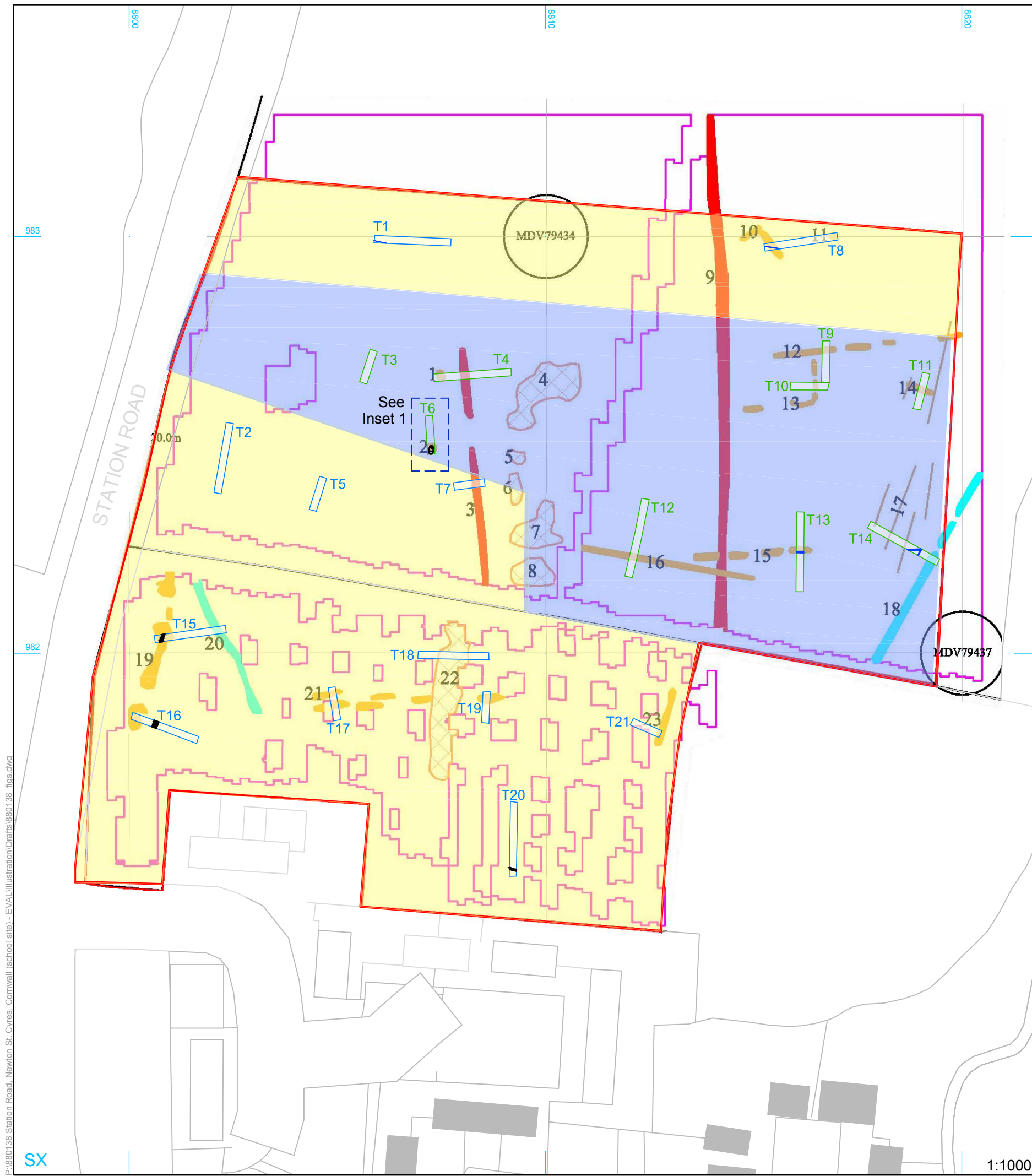
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 APPROVED BY DE

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 DATE 18/08/2016
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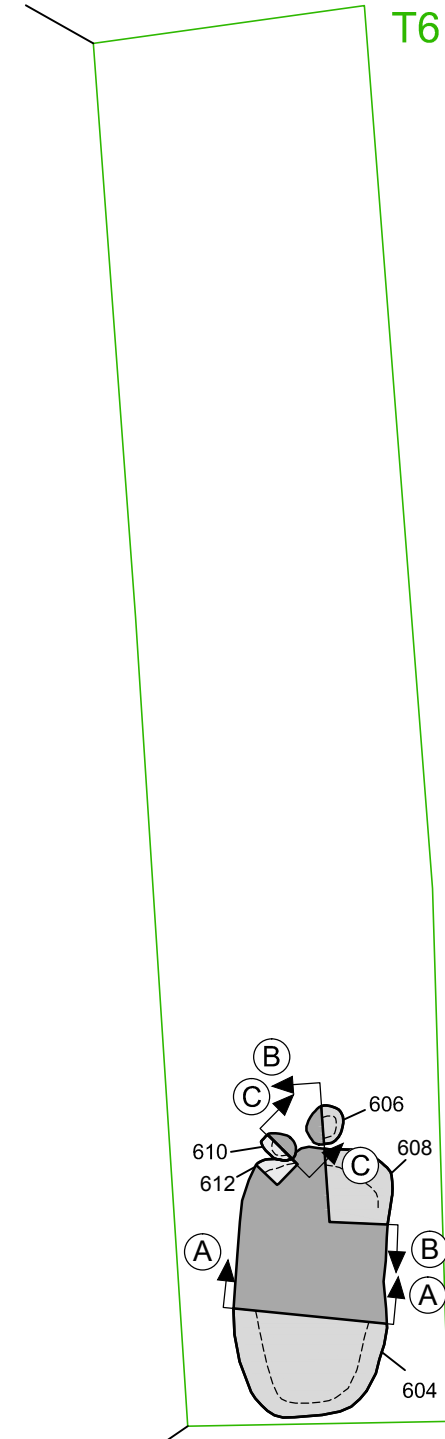
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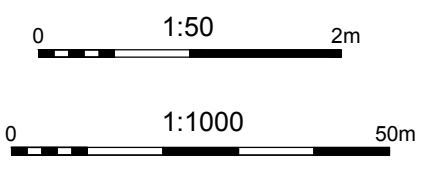
Inset 1

top: 30.8m AOD
base: 29.9m AOD



top: 31.0m AOD
base: 30.3m AOD

- site boundary
 - evaluation trench
 - current evaluation area
 - previous evaluation trench (CA2016)
 - previous evaluation area (CA2016)
 - archaeological feature
 - archaeological intervention
 - modern/field drain
 - section location
- Geophysical Key (Substrata 2014)
- survey limits
 - survey area
- Potential archaeology certainty, anomaly type
- likely, positive
 - possible, positive
 - possible, negative
 - possible, medium contrast
 - possible repeated parallels (3)



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Andover 01264 347630
 Cirencester 01285 771022
 Exeter 01392 826185
 Milton Keynes 01908 564660
 w www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
 e enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE
Station Road, Newton St Cyres, Devon

FIGURE TITLE
Trench location plan, showing archaeological features and geophysical survey results

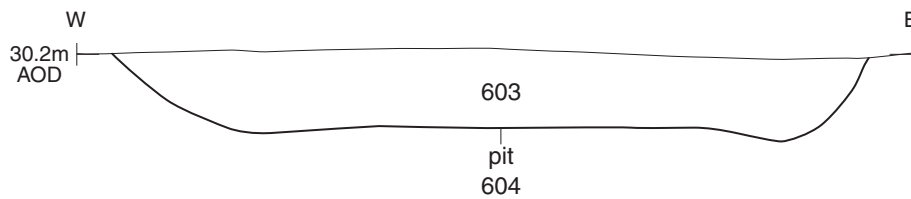
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| CHECKED BY | DB | DATE | 18/08/2016 | 2 |
| APPROVED BY | DE | SCALE@A3 | 1:1000, 1:50 | |

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SX

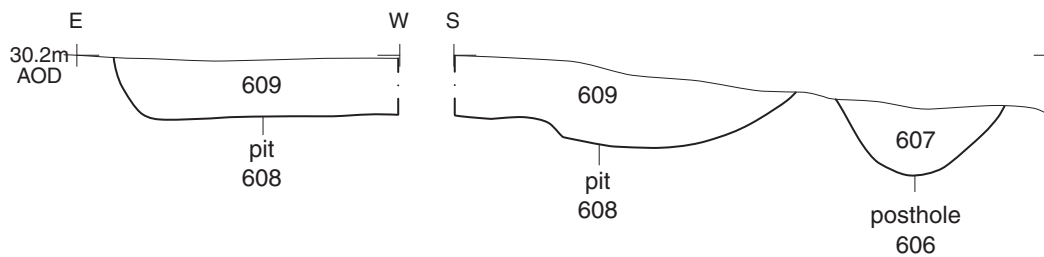
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Section AA

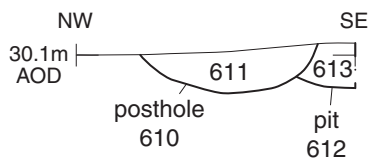


Trench 6, looking north (1m scales)

Section BB



Section CC



0 1:10 0.5m



Pit 604 and postholes 606 and 610, looking NW (0.4m scales)



Andover 01264 347630
Cirencester 01285 771022
Exeter 01392 826185
Milton Keynes 01908 564660
www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk
enquiries@cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk

PROJECT TITLE

Station Road, Newton, St. Cyres, Devon

FIGURE TITLE

Sections and photographs

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FIGURE NO.

3

Andover Office

Stanley House
Walworth Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 5LH

t: 01264 347630

Cirencester Office

Building 11
Kemble Enterprise Park
Cirencester
Gloucestershire
GL7 6BQ

t: 01285 771022

Exeter Office

Unit 53
Basepoint Business Centre
Yeoford Way
Marsh Barton Trading Estate
Exeter
EX2 8LB

t: 01392 826185

Milton Keynes Office

41 Burners Lane South
Kiln Farm
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
MK11 3HA

t: 01908 564660